Notes on the Ripper

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by teeth_soup

Summary

The pre-publishing journalist's notes of a late investigator for a small news group. These were seemingly collected during the investigation of the Chesapeake Ripper, revealed shortly prior to the reporter's death to be psychotherapist Hannibal Lecter.

These were seized by authorities after the death of the journalist during a breaking and entering shortly following Lecter's apprehension.

Notes

I was deeply dissatisfied by the handling of multiple subjects by the television show, including the source material, and disturbed by both the show and fanbases romanticization thereof. Still, the idea of the unreliable narration of one of Lecter's manipulation victims was intriguing, and I wanted to try and expand on it in my own style while tying the story back to the original novels as best as I can.

New Assignment: Chesapeake, Maryland

1/20/1974

Rich assigned me to an 'easy case.' Serial killer. Classic stuff.
They say by now guy's been tied to 4 deaths. No signs of slowing down either.

Frederick Lounds is on this case for the Tattler. Maybe I'll do some sightseeing. Shoot the shit, shoot the guy.
It pays to dream sometimes.

I've got a meeting later today with a correspondent on the subject. Local cop who'll be called Officer.
Can't use his name in the article or he'll get fired. No more suits if I can help it.

It's hard to focus in this short-term apartment. Wish Rich could pick one with less neighbors. I'm already away from my family. Why not add insult to injury with a broken marriage above me? Maybe some nancies in the room over to listen to at night? Maybe we'll throw in that the killer's living in the same damn block!
~~If this story doesn't catch me a break I'm quitting.~~
No I'm not.

I'm heading out to my interview now. It's half past six in the afternoon.
Wallet ✓
Keys ✓
Lighter ✓
Everything's in order.

Interview is held at a restaurant of correspondent's choice. Schaefer's, along the Back Creek canal.
I'm not paying. Thank god.

O - Officer, R - Yours truly.

Officer sits on a bench near the place, where I'm waiting for him. Guess I'm not getting a free meal.
O: Evening, kid.

I *hate* this guy. His eyes are this dull sandy brown that makes your mouth dry, and the way he looks at you is like there's nothing behind them.

R: Yeah, you too. Let's get to the point.
O: Gladly.
R: So you called my boss saying you had a tip, huh? Why didn't you just tell him there?
O: Well, this Nixon business has me worried about how, eh.. Secure things can be.

Of course he's one of those freaks who thinks the federal spooks are out to get him. Surprised he doesn't have a damn nosebleed.
Guy looks the part, at least. Skin's like driftwood. Grey, sweaty, and ugly.
At least there's no doubt the guy eats fine, yippies were right to call these blue boys pigs.

I play along, of course.
R: Yeah, you think that has anything to do with this whole song-and-dance?
O: Now that you mention it, they got this freak savant on staff. Something Graham, I think. Wouldn't be surprised if it was him, all that shit about "understanding the killer" he and his bossman talk on the scene.

Bingo. I've got a name I can ring my boss with.

O: I think this whole thing's gone too damn far. Now I'm toadying for some fed Crawford and his lackeys who keep that lunatic on a leash.

Distaste for things beyond his jurisdiction. Typical.

R: Crawford? Ain't that the behavioral mumbo head at the FBI just down the way?
O: I know! Hell of a response for, what, 4 killings?
R: You gotta admit, they're plenty brutal though. I mean, two of them can't even be identified, right?
O: Yeah, I guess you're right. Get this; newest one comes in last week. *Missing his whole chest cavity.* Clean out!

Yipes, remind me to stay away from anyone who looks particularly hungry around here, huh? Wish he'd spared me that detail. I wanted to go eat after this.

O: I mean, I knew that this guy was taking trophies or something-pulling organs out and all that-but you think he's trying to 'stein a friend?
I'm surprised this guy knows how to read, let alone read a half decent book.
R: Maybe he is. Listen, I gotta get to work, are there any other folks you know are on the case that might give me something to go off of?
O: Well, they brought in this shrink from Baltimore to help with the profiling. I can give you his address, since he isn't on the take from upstairs.

Lucky me, that was the last he said past clarifying spelling. He was starting to make me sick I think talking about it got him, though. While I was leaving, I heard him chuck into the canal.
I've got some leads now.

GRAHAM - Unstable? Related to investigation.
CRAWFORD - Head honcho for this creep's case. Might be forthcoming.
THERIPIST[sic] **- 1534 BOLTON, BALTIMORE**

Visit with the Shrink

1/22/1974

No dice on Graham. First name William, though.
Called his office and was told he was "recooperating."[sic] Check that up in a dictionary some time.
I'm sure he'll be in some other time.

Jack Crawford is too high up to get in with off the bat. Knew that already.
Remember to find numbers for his class in Quantico.

I have a last resort for the day though. Looked up 1534 Bolton in the yellows and found a guy.
Hannibal Lecter. What a goddamn name, right?

Luckily, he's on staff with the investigation so I'm allowed to use his name freely.
That and he's not uniform, so I could probably get more out of him than either of those feds.

Frankly, I'm anxious to get out of this building. I think someone's about to blow, and I don't wanna be here when the cops come for the domestic I've been subjected to. Good riddance, at least then I can do decent work from here.
Best I just make off before I'm roadblocked.

I'm leaving to hit the place now, at ~~eight in the evening.~~ I want to try and catch him without an appointment to run away with.
Wallet ✓
Keys ✓
Lighter ✓
Everything's in order.

Interview is held at the previously mentioned office. That's kind of obvious.

Presuming this is the correct therapist, I'll preface anything he says with L.

I'm finally here. Can't catch a cab in this town to save your life, let alone one that'll take you the whole damn way to Baltimore.
It's now almost half-past nine, but his lights are still on. I'm not giving up on this one.

First impressions are everything. Let me say, this one is bad.
This is the single gaudiest waiting room I've ever seen.
There are enough paintings you can barely tell what color the wallpaper is and they're all hideous.

Terrible things. You've got that artsy prick Dali here, a boring old Mondrian there.
Not that I'd know much about art, this guy is just so proud of his taste that he labels everything.

God do I hate Dali. I watched his What's My Line episode way back. He's like a damned clown. I hope Lecter's easier to stomach.

I was right in assuming the tall dark and pretentious looking door was his office.
With how fast he opened the door, I feel like he must have been waiting for me.

L: And who are you, walking in without an appointment?
I answer him in as few words as I can.

There's a lot to cover here.
Weird accent struck me right away. He talks like a goddamn radio commentator. Does anyone talk like that? I thought it was just showbiz.
I guess he does. Does it count as a real accent if only one person has it?

L: I see. |Guy pauses way too long.| Unfortunately, I am not at liberty to share many details of the case. Might I ask what firm you're with?
Yeah, right. Like I'm going to tell you that and get fired.

His eyes are upsetting. This off-rich brown, almost red. He keeps them wide like a doll's most of the time.
I think it's supposed to look welcoming? Feels more like he's looking for a reason to hit me.

I can barely see his face. The lobby light isn't on. That, and my gut doesn't want me looking at it.

L: Well, you may as well come in. We should see if you have any questions I *can* answer.
I'm going to have a rough time trying to figure out how to approach this guy.

He opens the door and steps out of the way in a movement I can only really describe as forced.
Everything this guy does is stilted. It's like he's doing a mime schtick. Teddy took a class once, they got all this 'control' and 'posture' mess.
How does anybody trust this guy enough to talk about their feelings with him?

L: Please, sit.
R: Of course.
I do. He doesn't. He just paces around the room.
R: So, I was wondering if you have any suspects thus far that you can disclose?
He cleans off his desk a bit. I guess he must have just got a new carpet fitted, he's got one of those silly hook knives.
I do not like the sight of this man fidgeting with a knife.
L: Unfortunately, I cannot say. I am, however, permitted to speak on some theories.
Are you kidding me? You can't tell me so you'll just tell me?
I knew this guy would be a chump. I might not even have to visit the higher ups.
R: Go on? I think, with cases this extreme, folks ought to know who to steer clear of.

He finally put the knife down. I'm getting my first good look at him.
[Handwriting becomes considerably less legible. Transcribed to the best of the department's abilities.]

Oh god.
He's got these crow's feet and round cheeks and big soft nose and smile lines you'd expect from a pleasant old person.
He looks kind and all. Problem is his mouth. It's too expressive. Not too wide or anything, it just doesn't [?]. Why won't it [?] right?
He's [?] at me in a way that I can not stand.

And that's to say nothing about the shape of this guy.
He can't be taller than 5' 10, but he's got these horrible [?] and these awful gangly arms.
I swear I've seen his fingers pass his knees. Why do you need arms like that?

Shit, I haven't been [writing?] the conversation. We talked shit about how it's likely a male with family problems or whatever. I don't know.
This is a bust.

I'll have to come back to confirm some facts.
[Handwriting abruptly returns to a calm state.]
That's alright. He's just some easy chump. It's fine.

Investigating the Federal Bureau

1/26/1974

I know I'm supposed to write reasons for long breaks in progress for the editor.
[Three unintelligible lines. Inked over completely, preventing transcription.]
I don't feel like I can explain it well enough. Please fudge the dates if you have to.

[More covered text. Given placement, likely little more than failed attempts to start writing.]

Got an opening after the class Crawford teaches. He's getting me in with Graham.
Think I'm ready to talk to some paragons of the field.

They got the folks upstairs on too many noise complaints. You'd better be showing these notes to Rich.
I want a better place to stay after this, jackass. At least somewhere that feels safe.

It's a long drive and I need to find a cabbie that'll do it, so I'm leaving around noon.
I'll address time of interview when I arrive.
Wallet ✓
Keys ✓
Lighter ✓
Everything's in order.

In the cab right now. Couple of notes.
One, this guy is scalping me hard. Remind me to avoid CCS cars.
Two, you've definitely already seen it but I came up with the perfect title for this entry on this ride.
I know you like those.

I forgot to write that I was on-site. Been sitting in this guy's class for half an hour now.
By my best guess it's almost four now.

Hate listening to this guy. You can hear the Brooklyn in him.
I know you aren't supposed to judge for where folks come from, but it's hard to take him serious.

Now he's acting like he's the first person to ever hear of Dean Corll.
It was in every paper. Even I ran a story on the murders once they hit my neck of the woods.

That's enough class notes. Get back to you when I can actually do my damn job. Every time I visit one of these bigheads I get sidetracked.

Thank God above that I didn't die during that lecture. It's five on the dot and he's sitting across from me in his office.
C for Crawford, of course.

He asks me, kindly enough, if I'm here about the Ripper for our firm. Of course he absolutely butchers the name.
I know, I'm not funny.

C: I'm not sure where you heard about my association with the case, but at least you warned me you were coming.
Stern, but not harsh. Easy enough to talk my way around.
R: Of course. I figured that because you're a big name in the investigative field there was some respect due.
C: Don't take that tone with me, I know your type. You profilers are all the same.
He finally looks up from his papers. He looks very proud of that joke.

His eyes remind me of my old man's. Soft, but pointed. A greying brown that looks like hard work and age. Might ask if he has kids some time.
When I'm not playing him, I mean.

C: You'd make a nice face around here. Tried to pin me down in the first sentence. Could I interest you in a different case, at least?
R: No, sir. |Why did I say that?| I've invested too much time not to get a spotlight on this case.
C: Fella, I deal with putting people in boxes for a living. Gimme a challenge and get creative?
Oh, I *like* you. You got balls, Crawford.
C: What are you writing there? I didn't say anything worth detailed notes.
R: Nothing, just that you're being obstinate and harsh. I'm sure that should make the papers when this case goes nowhere.

I got a smile out of him for that one.

His face looks old. Older than he should look at 40. Is that really a surprise?
All of him is trimmed neatly. He looks like he's made of simple shapes. A boxy head. A rectangle moustache. A triangle goatee.
Easy to digest, but not much more. At least his talk makes up for it.

C: And I'm sure you'll be quoted on it when we find out you're an accomplice.
R: Hey, you haven't read me my rights yet. Am I gonna have to call up my boss' lawyer?

Okay, as much as this guy might not be open to me, I'd love to get a drink with him.
Might have to call him up once I'm done with the research for the article.

C: Ha-ha. Listen, fella. I'm not gonna tell you anything because I don't want ~~Jessie~~ thinking we're |Elaborated - Chessie|
R: Jessie? Please don't tell me that's the prime suspect's name.
C: No you dolt, Chessie See, that's the problem with media coverage. Too much interpretation. We'd never have that here.
R: That's not the point. People not knowing who's being targeted puts them in danger. Nobody knows who to keep inside.
C: Like you'd care about anything but the headline.

Guy's good, I'll give him that. I don't think even he knows the pattern though.

C: Listen, I can't tell you too much about this case, but I've got a few smaller ones for you if you really need to put something out.
R: No, I really need anything I can get, even if it's just interviews with the staff. If it'll change your tune, I could make you sound competent?

His laugh is warmer than I'd expect from somebody who stares at case files all day.

C: Hear me out. This kind of sharing is discretionary. I don't want to, but I think you'll find a fine interview subject in Mr. Graham, down the hall.
R: Crafty. Don't want the blame if it gets out on your terms?
C: Just get on out, mouthy. To the left a ways, it'll be on your right. One with the hardwood handle.

They installed a custom damn door handle for this guy. Who is he?
I've never seen a Will Graham come on the TV. Or the radio, for that matter.
Gotta be a big shot though. Or a psycho. One of the two.

He called me in. Unrelated, but remind me to get a wood handle on my office door.
It just feels really nice on the hand is all.

G for Graham. I'm sure we've established a pattern here.

He doesn't seem to want to talk first. That's alright, I getcha.

Something's creaking in here.

His eyes are green. I thought that was just nonsense some people said to sound cool.
They're hard to get a read on, though. When I look at them he just averts his eyes. I used to do that too.
We[?] look tired.

Looking at this guy, I wouldn't think special agent. You hear that and you think Bond. Trim, imposing. Obnoxious.
Will isn't anything like that. Looks like he doesn't take good enough care. Like he's ready to give.

The creaking is nice. It's rhythmic.

His office is nice. It's a lot like mine. Things in their places as they make sense to <u>me.</u>

Why can't I bring myself to talk? Why wo
G: Please stop writing like that.
R: Like what?
G: You've got this look. I don't
It's okay, man. Collect your words.
G: Is it harsh?

I'm gonna show him. I feel like it's best to be real in this situation.
He looks a lot more comfortable now, at least.

G: Oh, creaking? I have
Will manages to lose his sentence while he's in his pocket.
It's just a busted up staple remover. He lets me give it a try.

I get it now.

R: Can I ask you about the case with the Chesapeake Ripper?
G: I'd really rather you not. Focusing on it too much can get a little..
Will makes a sound like he's just bitten into rubbery steak.
R: Yeah, I get that.

Went back and forth for a bit. Didn't cover much ground case-wise, so nothing worth noting down.
That's not to say I didn't enjoy the talk.

There's something about this guy I can connect with. Only ever had it with school friends.
Being around him is more comfortable than I'd expected.

I'll probably come back to him. He gets me.

Please drop by the Archive and comment to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!